

ANNUAL REPORT

OF THE

EDITORIAL COMMITTEE

1919

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PRINTER TO THE KING'S MOST EXCELLENT MAJESTY  
1920







OTTAWA, March 1, 1920.

*To the Advisory Committee of Council  
on Governmental Publications.*

GENTLEMEN,—Since its appointment in October, 1918, the Editorial Committee has held forty-three meetings. During the past year there has been no cessation of its labours; many important problems have arisen and considerable success has been achieved.

With the cessation of the war there was an evident disposition on the part of a few branches of the Public Service to get back into the old lines, but realizing that the necessity for public economy was never greater than at present, the committee has, with the approval of Council, steadfastly adhered to its policy of cutting off useless printing. The situation has been fairly represented to the different departments, and, as a rule, there has been prompt acquiescence in the committee's views.

As pointed out in last year's report, one of the many achievements which the committee has been able to bring about has been the reduction, both in the text of manuscripts of reports and the number of copies printed. This is shown by the comparative tables which follow; 1915-16 being the last year preceding any work by the committee:—

## DEPARTMENTAL REPORTS.

	1915-16.	1917-18.	1918-19.
No. of copies.. . . .	325,365	195,624	151,425
No. of pages.. . . .	39,356	26,482	19,808
Total number of printed pages.. . .	210,007,404	105,261,128	55,742,120
Distribution to Parliament.. . . .	112,600	72,735	51,685
Distribution to Departments.. . . .	162,060	91,354	83,065
Stock.. . . .	6,905	5,685	3,480
Sessional Papers.. . . .	43,600	25,850	13,225
Cost.. . . .	\$255,813	\$196,285	\$150,509

## SUPPLEMENTARY REPORTS.

The comparative figures of supplementary reports to Parliament for the same years are:—

	1915-16.	1917-18.	1918-19.
No. of copies.. . . .	222,085	123,075	56,080
No. of pages.. . . .	19,508	13,168	5,776
Total number of printed pages.. . .	60,799,190	23,313,800	11,067,120
Distribution to Parliament.. . . .	67,950	49,050	17,950
Distribution to Departments.. . . .	136,575	60,675	32,700
Stock.. . . .	1,840	1,750	580
Sessional Papers.. . . .	15,720	11,600	4,850
Cost.. . . .	\$87,488	\$61,612	\$38,457

These figures speak for themselves. A further reduction will be shown for 1919-20.

## REVISION OF MAILING LISTS.

The committee cannot too strongly emphasize the importance of constant revision by the public departments of their mailing lists. Frequently your committee has detected upon these lists the names of individuals long since dead. In other cases, several departmental lists carried the names of school children who manifestly could have no interest in the reports they were receiving, and whose sole desire seemingly was to receive a postal package from the Government.



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## DISTRIBUTION METHODS.

It must not be forgotten that the King's Printer, among other duties assigned to him by the Public Printing and Stationery Act (R.S.C., chap. 80), is charged with "the sale of all books or publications issued by order of either or both Houses of Parliament or by any department of the Government." In the past this provision of the statute has been generally ignored by the departments. An individual would write to a department asking for its report, and instead of the communication being forwarded to the King's Printer for action, the department, in most cases, would forward a free copy of the report, and possibly also place the name upon its mailing list to receive the report annually. By this system of indiscriminate distribution, which created a fictitious demand for copies of reports, thousands of dollars have, in past years, been lost annually to the country by overprinting.

The committee does not wish to be understood as advocating the enforcement of the law regarding distribution in an arbitrary manner. While the statute says "all publications" must be paid for, certain classes of the Canadian people have been so accustomed to receiving Government reports free, that it will take some time to effect the desired change. Besides, it should be borne in mind that there are some reports the free distribution of which is a distinct gain to the country. Notably in this connection may be mentioned the publications of the departments of Trade and Commerce, Interior, and Agriculture. Any report or bulletin which is calculated to assist production, or to develop trade, may fairly be distributed free, always assuming that the departments exercise the greatest possible care in the matter of their mailing lists.

## ADVANCE NOTIFICATION.

In this connection your committee again urges upon all departments the desirability of adopting the "notification post card." It has been tried with great success by the Central Distribution office, and some departments. The method pursued is to send out a card immediately a manuscript is received at the Printing Bureau. Based upon the answers received within, say, one month thereafter, the number of copies to be circulated is determined. The result has been a material reduction in the number of copies printed of a given publication. The committee would urge the adoption of this plan in the distribution of the Auditor General's Report, the publications of the Commission of Conservation, the reports of the Department of Mines (both branches, Geological Survey and Mines), reports of the Bureau of Statistics, the bulletins of the Forestry Branch, and some of the publications of the Department of Agriculture.

With every Government report an acknowledgment card equivalent to a receipt should be included, and if this be not returned within a reasonable time, the name of the recipient should be struck off the list. Action in the direction indicated has been followed to a limited extent, but the committee has hesitated in taking drastic steps without the direct sanction of Parliament.

## THE AUDITOR'S REPORT.

Reference has been made to the Auditor General's Report. Realizing that these bulky volumes are the keystone of the Government system of publicity, the efforts of the committee have been directed to assisting the Auditor General to see that this reports gets into proper hands. The publication of certain information in the Auditor General's Report in the past, has not only resulted in the detection of wrongdoing, but has been in the nature of a warning to individuals who might be inclined to err. The padding of pay-lists, through this medium of publicity, is now practically impossible.



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Your committee was instrumental in effecting, with the consent of Parliament the bi-lingualizing of this report, and, in addition, the prevention of overprinting. The set of four volumes, constituting the Auditor General's Report, has, during the past four or five years, averaged 10 pounds in weight. Based upon the number of sets (6,055) printed in 1916, the edition represented the consumption of 60,500 pounds, over thirty tons, of paper. The price paid for this paper for some years has averaged between 9 and 10 cents per pound, so that the stock used in each set of the Auditor's Report has cost the country 90 cents or one dollar, without taking into consideration the cost of composition—the largest item—presswork, binding, and translation. Last year the paper used in this report amounted to 24,850 pounds, or a little over 12 tons, a reduction of nearly 60 per cent as compared with 1916. Bi-lingualizing and the reduction in the number of copies is saving the country nearly \$30,000 annually on this one report alone.

## SEPARATE PARTS.

In our report for 1918 the suggestion was offered that, without impairing the value of this publication, the public interest would be equally, if not better, served by the printing of "separates" of the receipts and expenditures of the larger spending departments. We pointed out that while parliamentarians, the public departments, and a few libraries, would naturally want the complete report of the Audit Department, the commercial community, those who have products for sale to the Government, as a rule only required the details of purchases made by the department in which they were particularly interested. Thus, for instance, the man handling railway supplies will desire to see what the Department of Railways and Canals has been purchasing, from whom, and the prices paid; papermakers, stationers, etc., what the Department of Public Printing and Stationery has paid to the different firms with which it has been doing business; manufacturers of postal supplies, what the Post Office has purchased; manufacturers of military supplies, what the Department of Militia has bought, and so on. We are glad to state that as regards the 1918-19 report of the Auditor General this plan is to be given a trial to a limited extent. While, as a measure of precaution, the committee has not ordered a reduction in the number of copies of complete sets from the 1917-18 figures, viz., 2,485, we are sanguine that at the end of the year the experiment will have been proved successful, and that in succeeding years, by the substitution of "separates" it will be possible to effect a considerable saving by still further reducing the size of the edition of the complete report.

## NEWSPRINT.

The use of newsprint in the Daily Routine Papers of Parliament and certain departmental publications having been authorized by the Joint Committee on Printing, was adopted in March, 1919, and has resulted in an economy of several thousand dollars annually.

## OVERLAPPING AND DUPLICATION

One of the great difficulties which the committee has experienced has been to prevent duplication or overlapping of information in the reports, bulletins, etc., issued by different branches of the service. Some steps should be taken to put an end to this practice by a definition of jurisdiction. The Agricultural Gazette, Conservation, Agricultural Statistics, and the Weekly Bulletin, frequently deal with the same questions in concurrent issues.



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## AGRICULTURAL GAZETTE.

Upon the representations of the committee, the quality of the paper stock used in the printing of the Agricultural Gazette was reduced by arrangement with the department. An annual saving of over \$3,000 will be effected by the change, and the typographical appearance of the publication maintained.

## ILLUSTRATIONS.

The committee has kept a watchful eye upon the number of illustrations appearing in reports or pamphlets of a descriptive character, and upon the whole its representations have been met in a friendly manner. The Department of Public Printing has recently been advised by the Manufacturing Engravers of Canada of a substantial increase in the cost of half-tones and line cuts, thereby imposing upon the departments the necessity for the greatest economy in this matter.

The comparative figures of the past four years of the reductions in the use of illustrations in annual and supplementary reports is evidence of what the committee has been able to accomplish:—

Plates inserted, 1916..	9,397,865
“ “ 1917..	6,622,005
“ “ 1918..	2,326,840
“ “ 1919..	137,100

## INSURANCE REPORT.

It may not be generally known that the cost of printing the annual reports of the Insurance Department is assessed against the different companies. In the past the average annual expenditure upon these reports has been about \$26,000. There is no reason, however, why the insurance companies should pay for waste. The committee desires to acknowledge the prompt manner in which Mr. Finlayson, Superintendent of Insurance, accepted certain of its suggestions regarding the preparation of the manuscript of the annual report of the Insurance Department. The changes effected will result in a saving to the companies of \$3,000 a year.

## NEW PUBLICATIONS.

Attention is drawn to the ministerial ruling that no new periodical publication can be started by a Government Department without the direct authority of Council. The need for this was manifest to the committee. We have in mind a publication which was intended to be monthly, but of which only one issue appeared. The preparation of the cover alone cost over \$300. For some unknown reason this publication ceased with the first issue, with the result that the Department of Public Printing has on hand thousands of covers which are absolute waste. Within the past year proposals to issue three periodical publications were dropped by the departments interested when it became known that ministerial sanction must be obtained before the work could be put in hand.

## MILITIA LIST.

When your committee first assumed its duties it was found that the quarterly Militia List was costing the country over \$25,000 per annum. Upon our recommendation the quarterly issue was changed to semi-annually. This meant a yearly saving to the country of over \$12,000. Since the war the volume is bigger and bulkier than ever, and is now costing the country over \$7,000 for each edition. Recognizing that the requirements of the service are largely met by the monthly Militia Orders your com-



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mittee represented to the Sub-committee of Council that the publication of the Militia List annually would probably meet the situation. The question was recently discussed by the Right Honourable Sir George Foster with the Honourable Hugh Guthrie, Minister of Militia, and the committee is gratified to learn that its recommendation has been accepted. This will mean a further saving of \$7,000 a year.

## WASTE IN THE DEPARTMENTS.

Your committee is fully conscious that, despite its efforts to inculcate a spirit of economy, much waste is still going on in the public departments. Paper of the best quality is being used in some departments for work of an unimportant character, when cheaper stock would serve the purpose equally as well. Envelopes of a much larger size than the contents require are often used. Errors may be made in the typing of envelopes and the spoiled envelope immediately goes into the wastepaper basket, instead of being made a medium for inter-departmental communication. Formal letters are written on embossed stationery, when the cheaper memorandum form could be used. If heads of branches would not only set the example to their subordinates, but, in addition, take the trouble to check clerks who are prone to wastefulness, the annual stationery account of the different departments would be materially reduced. Stationery, like everything else, has increased enormously in cost in recent years and, therefore, the obligation is thrown upon each department to see that every possible saving be made.

## THE ORDERING OF ENVELOPES.

In this connection attention may be drawn to the growing practice of both Houses of Parliament and the departments, in ordering odd-sized envelopes. The chief objection to the use of specially made envelopes is the extra cost involved. Envelope manufacturers have dies made for the cutting of "standard" sizes. Therefore, when a special envelope is asked for there has to be either a special adjustment of the old die, a new die made, or else the envelope must be cut by hand. During the eight months from April to November last, the Superintendent of Stationery received 126 different requisitions from Parliament and the public departments for five million envelopes of special sizes. While admitting that, in certain circumstances, envelopes of sizes other than those known to the trade as "standard" may be necessary, yet the committee feels that some authority should step in to restrict the present practice, which is growing into an abuse. The total number of standard sized envelopes carried in stock in the Stationery Branch of the Department of Public Printing is 26, which should suffice for nearly all purposes.

It may be mentioned that the Editorial Committee has been instrumental in checking the use, principally inter-departmentally, of cloth-lined envelopes costing from 7 to 8 cents each. Without any thought of cost, such unimportant enclosures as proofs for the Bureau would be placed in this class of envelope, when the cheapest kind, kraft or manila, would suit the purpose equally as well.

The number of kraft envelopes 15-inch x 9½-inch—which carries a half-cap document, 13-inch x 8-inch—requisitioned annually by the different departments of the Government reached the enormous total of 1,909,000 last year. It is safe to say that half this quantity will have been used for inter-departmental communications. If instead of cutting these large envelopes with a paper knife, a pen handle or pencil be inserted under the flap they could be opened without destroying the envelope. The adoption of this plan permits the use of the envelope a second or even a third time between departments, simply by scoring out the last address and writing a new one. This system has been in successful operation in a few departments, and should be generally adopted. Your committee would go even further, and recommend that departments be required to use the "economy" sticker which has been much in vogue in the United Kingdom during the period of the war. These can be supplied at half



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the cost of the envelope, and will prolong the life of the envelope so that it may be used ten or twelve times.

## PRINTING UNIMPORTANT DOCUMENTS.

There is a steadily increasing tendency on the part of some departments to use printer's ink for the most trivial things. Repeatedly, your committee has held up orders for, say, 100 copies of a half-sheet of printed matter when it was known that the particular department sending in the requisition possessed one or more good mimeographs. Almost invariably when the attention of the deputy minister, or other high official, was called to the nature of the order, he has readily acquiesced in the committee's view and the request for printing has been withdrawn.

## BINDERY WORK.

Your committee has endeavoured to limit the binding of reports for departments. Admitting that some publications should be given a permanent cover, yet so greatly has the custom been abused in recent years, that your committee has deemed it its duty to call attention to the matter with a view to the adoption of limitations. Some officials seem to forget that every operation at the Printing Bureau costs money. Bindery materials, cloth, tape, leather, millboard, linen thread, etc., have all greatly increased in price. The latter, which seems a small item, on a big order would add very materially to the cost. Therefore, only books of an important character should be bound.

## ADVERTISING SLIPS.

The attention of several departments has been called to the practice of causing advertisement slips to be printed although the advertisement itself might only be intended for insertion in two or three newspapers, and when typed copies would meet the situation. The reason given was that this system had prevailed "since Confederation." The committee has had a rather difficult task in getting rid of the "since Confederation" idea. The printing of advertisement slips during the last forty or fifty years must have cost the country thousands of dollars. Where a large number of advertisements are going out printed "ad" slips may be necessary, but in the case of two or three publications only, it is money thrown away to have them first put into type.

## DISPOSITION OF SURPLUS REPORTS.

Fifty years of Confederation have led to the accumulation in Ottawa of vast stores of Sessional Papers, Official Debates, and reports of various kinds. Hundreds of thousands of volumes of Government reports of all kinds are stored in the Central Distribution Office on York Street, and must be disposed of. Storage space costs money in these days of high rentals. Your committee has been charged by Council with the duty of distributing these surplus books to different libraries of Canada and will endeavour to do so in the best interests of the country.

In closing its report for the past year, the committee desires to express its obligations to all branches of the Public Service for the hearty co-operation shown to it in its labours. We realize that at the outset of our work there were manifestations of friction due possibly to the fact that as the departments, for many years, had had practically a free hand as regards printing, they did not relish the idea of being subjected to editorial supervision. All this feeling has passed away, except possibly in one or two minor cases.

Respectfully submitted,

FRED. COOK, *Chairman*,

F. C. T. O'HARA,

C. C. LYNCH,